

I would like to voice my opposition to the current proposals to allow multiple media outlet ownerships in one location. The Constitution recognizes our right to free speech. I believe that by allowing companies to own multiple media outlets in the same location; they will in effect, limit free speech. Their economic and political agendas will not doubt impact what they allow on the airwaves and with the ability to control numerous media outlets - they can in effect ensure their position is reinforced and can effectively block out or limit alternative viewpoints from being heard. This is frightening when one considers how much everyday citizens rely on the media as sources of information and for help in making decisions. The media's power to shape public opinion was obvious during the recent war in Iraq. There was little to no coverage of alternative viewpoints, not even much substance or depth to the reporting. Whatever the political position of the TV stations, the desire to show dramatic footage and to "out-do" each other for ratings was strongly evident. The only sources of facts and serious discussions/debate on the war were the smaller independent stations and newspapers. And one really had to search them out or know about them to find them. Loosening of the current ownership regulations will only make it more difficult if not impossible for these independent outlets to survive. Freedom of the press should not be contingent upon the size of one's pocket book. In loosening regulations you give large, media corporations an overwhelming advantage in the market, you will surely cause the extinction of the independent, community-based radio station. As a result you will do nothing but undermine the debate and varied perspectives that are vital to the survival of a healthy democracy.